

AP Government

Key Terms List

- Linkage Institutions** - institutions such as parties, elections, interest groups, and the media, which provide a linkage between the preferences of citizens and the government's policy agenda
- Majority rule** - weighing the desires of the majority in choosing among policy alternatives
- Minority rights** – protecting the rights and freedoms of the minority in choosing among policy alternatives
- Policy agenda** - the list of subjects or problems to which people inside and outside government are paying serious attention at any given time
- Policymaking institutions** - institutions such as Congress, the presidency, and the courts established by the Constitution to make policy
- Politics** - determines whom we select as our government leaders and what policies they pursue; in other words, who gets what, when, and how
- Public policy** - a choice that government makes in response to some issue on its agenda
- Representation** - the relationship between the leaders and the followers
- Single-issue groups** - groups so concerned with one matter that their members cast their votes on the basis of that issue only
- Anti-Federalists** - opposed the new Constitution, feared the new Constitution would erode fundamental liberties, and argued that the new Constitution was a class-based document serving the economic elite
- Bill of Rights** - the first ten Amendments to the Constitution passed after ratification specifically protecting individual liberties to fulfill promises made by the Federalists to the Anti-Federalists in return for their support.
- Checks and balances** - each branch required the consent of the others for many of its decisions
- Factions** - groups of people, currently known as political parties or interest groups, who arise as a result of unequal distribution of wealth to seize the reins of government in their own interest
- Federalists** - argued for ratification of the Constitution by writing the *Federalist Papers*; included Madison, Hamilton, and Jay
- Judicial Review** - the courts have the power to decide whether the actions of the legislative and executive branches of state and national governments are in accordance with the Constitution
- Limited government** - clear restrictions on what rulers could do and which safeguard natural rights
- Natural Rights** - these are rights to which people are entitled by natural law, including life, liberty, and property
- Republic** - a system based on the consent of the governed where power is exercised by representatives of the public.
- Separation of powers** - each branch of government would be independent of the other.
- Writ of *habeas corpus*** - this enables people who are detained by authorities to secure an immediate inquiry and reasons why they have been detained.
- Elastic clause** - the statement in the Constitution which says that Congress has the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out its duties
- Enumerated powers** - powers of Congress found in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.
- Federalism** - a system of shared power between two or more levels of government
- Full faith and credit** - Article IV of the Constitution requires states to provide reciprocity toward other states' public acts, records, and civil judicial proceedings
- Implied powers** - powers beyond Congress' enumerated powers which ensure that it can carry out its duties

Supremacy clause - Article VI of the Constitution states that the supreme law of the land is the Constitution, the laws of the national government, and treaties

Civil liberties - legal and constitutional protections against government infringement of political liberties and criminal rights

Due process clause – Part of the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteeing that persons cannot be deprived of life, liberty, or property by the U.S. or state governments without due process of law

Establishment clause - First Amendment prohibits government from establishing a religion; is the basis for separation of church and state

Free exercise clause - government is prohibited in the First Amendment from interfering in the practice of religion

Prior restraint - government instrument to prevent material from being published

Exclusionary rule - prohibits government from including illegally obtained evidence in a trial

Civil rights - extending citizenship rights to participate to those previously denied them

Suffrage - the legal right to vote

Poll taxes - taxes levied on the right to vote designed to hurt poor blacks

Affirmative action - a policy designed to give special consideration to those previously discriminated against

Census - a count of the American population conducted every ten years

Exit poll - a poll taken at randomly selected polling places after the citizens have placed their votes

Minority majority - a reference to the impending status of White, Anglo-Saxon Americans, currently holding majority status

Political ideology - a coherent set of values and beliefs about public policy

Political socialization - the process by which citizens acquire their knowledge, feelings, and evaluations of the political world

Random sampling - a polling technique which is based on the principle that everyone has an equal probability of being selected as part of the sample

Reapportionment - the reallocation of 435 seats in the House of Representatives based on changes in residency and population found in the census

Mass media - media which reaches and influences both elites and the masses

Narrowcasting - strategy of some broadcast channels that appeal to a narrow, rather than a broad, audience

Policy entrepreneurs - political activists who invest their political capital in an issue

Trial balloons - information leaked to the media to see what the political reaction will be

Closed primaries - nomination contests where only people who have registered in advance with the party can vote

Critical election - an election where each party's coalition of support begins to break up and a new coalition of forces is formed for each party

Open primaries - nomination contests where voters can decide on election day whether they want to participate in the Democratic or Republican contest

Party dealignment - when voters move away from both parties

Party identification - the self-proclaimed preference for one or the other party

Party machine - a particular kind of party organization that depends on both specific and material inducements for rewarding loyal party members

Party realignment - process whereby the major political parties form new support coalitions that endure for a long period

Patronage - one of the key inducements used by machines whereby jobs are given for political reasons rather than for merit or competence alone

Political party - a team of men and women seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election

Rational-choice theory - a theory that seeks to explain political processes and outcomes as consequences of purposive behavior, where political actors are assumed to have goals and who pursue those goals rationally

Third party - minor parties which either promote narrow ideological issues or are splinter groups from the major parties

Caucus - a meeting to determine which candidate delegates from a state party will support

Direct mail - the use of targeted mailings to prospective supporters, usually compiled from lists of those who have contributed to candidates and parties in the past

Frontloading - states' decisions to move their presidential primaries and caucuses to earlier in the nomination season in order to capitalize on media attention

Party platform - the party's statement of its goals and policies for the next four years

Political Action Committee (PAC) - a legal entity formed expressly for the purpose of contributing money to candidates and influencing electoral outcomes

Soft money - money raised by political parties for voter registration drives and the distribution of campaign material at the grass roots level, now banned at the national level

Superdelegates - delegates to the Democratic Party's national convention who obtain their seats on the basis of their positions within the party structure

527 Groups - independent groups that seek to influence the political process but are not subject to contribution restrictions because they do not directly advocate the election of a particular candidate

Electoral College - the institution designated in the Constitution whereby a body of electors selects the president and vice president

Mandate theory of elections - the belief that the election winner has a mandate to implement policy promises

Policy voting - occurs when people base their choices on how close a candidate's issues positions are to their own issue preferences

Political efficacy - the belief that ordinary people can influence government

Referendum - direct democracy technique that allows citizens to approve or disapprove some legislative act, bond, issue, or constitutional amendment proposed by a state legislature

Amicus curiae briefs - friend of the court briefs filed by interest groups to inform the court of their position and to state how their welfare would be affected by a ruling

Electioneering - helping sympathetic candidates get into office

Elite theory - argues that because only a few groups have enough power to influence policy, power is concentrated into a few interlocking power centers

Hyperpluralist theory - argues that too many groups are getting what they want at the expense of the unrepresented and that this behavior leads to incoherent public policy

Pluralist theory - argues that interest group activities provide additional representation and compete against each other to influence political outcomes

Interest groups - organizations where people with similar policy goals enter the political process to achieve those goals

Lobbying - a communication by someone other than a citizen acting on his or her own behalf, directed to a governmental decision maker with the hope of influencing his or her decision

Potential group - a group composed of all people who share some common interest

Single-issue groups - groups which have very narrow interests, shun compromise, and single-mindedly pursue goals

Subgovernments - exclusive relationships composed of interest groups leaders, government agency personnel, and members of congressional committees who perform mutually beneficial services for each other at the public's expense

Bicameral legislature - a legislature that is divided into two chambers

Bill - a proposed law, drafted in precise, legal language

Casework - helping constituents as individuals cut through bureaucratic red tape to receive their rightful benefits

Cloture – ends a filibuster with a vote of 60 members

Conference committees - a special committee formed when each chamber passes a bill in different forms, composed of members of each chamber who were appointed by each chamber's leaders to work out a compromise bill

Filibuster - is unlimited debate, is unique to the Senate, and can only be ended by a vote for cloture by 60 members

House Rules Committee - a committee unique to the House, which is appointed by the Speaker of the House, reviews most bills coming from a House committee for a floor vote, and which gives each bill a rule

Incumbents - people who already hold office

Joint committees - special committees composed of members from each chamber

Majority leader - The Speaker's principal partisan ally who is responsible for soliciting support for the party's position on legislation

Minority leader - is the minority party's counterpart to the majority party's leadership

Pork barrel - list of federal projects, grants, and contracts available to cities, businesses, colleges, and institutions

Select committees – committees appointed for a specific purpose

Speaker of the House - is mandated by the Constitution, is next in line after the vice president to succeed a president who is unable to fulfill his/her term and who presides over the House

Standing committees – permanent committees formed in each chamber to handle bills in different policy areas

Whips - The majority or minority leader's principle tool for securing support for legislation and who lobby partisans for support

Impeachment - the political equivalent of an indictment for removing a discredited president

Cabinet - the group of presidential advisors who head the executive departments

National Security Council - a committee that links the president's key foreign and military advisors

Office of Management and Budget - responsible for preparing the president's budget and assessing the budgetary implications of legislative proposals

Veto - sending the legislation back to Congress with reasons for rejecting it

Pocket veto - this occurs when Congress adjourns within 10 days after submitting a bill and the president takes no action to sign it or veto it

War Powers Resolution - passed in 1973, requires presidents to consult with Congress prior to using military force and mandates the withdrawal of forces after sixty days unless Congress declares war or grants an extension

Legislative veto - a clause which allows Congress to override the action of the executive

Electoral mandate – a concept based on the idea that “the people have spoken”. It is a powerful symbol of American electoral politics, according legitimacy and credibility to a newly elected president's proposals

Budget - a policy document that allocates burdens (taxes) and benefits (expenditures)

Deficit - occurs when government spends more money than it receives in taxes in the fiscal year

Expenditures - money spent by the government in any one year

Revenues - money received by the government in any given year

Income tax - the portion of money individuals are required to pay to the government from the money they earned

Federal debt - all of the money borrowed by the government over the years that is still outstanding

Tax expenditures - revenue losses due to special exemptions, exclusions, and deductions

Social Security Act - passed to provide a minimal level of sustenance to older Americans

Medicare - in 1965, this program was added to Social Security to provide hospital and physician coverage to the elderly

Incrementalism - the best predictor of this year's budget is last year's budget plus a little bit more

Entitlements - expenditures for which the total amount spent is not by congressional appropriation, but rather by rules of eligibility established by Congress

Authorization bill - an act of Congress that establishes a discretionary government program or an entitlement, or that continues or changes such programs

Appropriations bill - bill passed annually to fund an authorized program

Bureaucracy - implementers of policy

Civil service - promotes hiring on the basis of merit and establishes a nonpartisan government service

Policy implementation - the stage of policymaking between the establishment of a policy and the results of the policy for individuals

Street-level bureaucrats -bureaucrats who are in constant contact with the public

Regulation - the use of governmental authority to control or change some practice in the private sector

Deregulation - the withdrawal of the use of governmental authority to control or change some practice in the private sector

Incentive system - regulatory strategy that rewards individuals or corporations for desired types of behavior, usually through the tax code

Executive orders - regulations originating in the executive branch

Iron triangles - refers to the strong ties among government agencies, interest groups, and congressional committees and subcommittees

Standing to sue – litigants must have serious interest (sustained direct and substantial injury) from a party in a case

Justiciable disputes - cases that can be settled by legal methods

Original jurisdiction - given to a court where a case is first heard

District courts - the entry point for most federal litigation

Courts of appeal - courts which have the power to review all final decisions of district courts, except in instances requiring direct review by the Supreme Court

Supreme Court - resolves disputes between and among states, maintains the national supremacy of law, ensures uniformity in the interpretation of national laws

Opinion - a statement of the legal reasoning behind the decision

Stare decisis - an earlier decision should hold for the case being considered.

Precedent - the way similar cases have been handled in the past is used as a guide to current decisions.

Original intent - the theory that judges should determine the intent of the framers and decide in line with their intent

Judicial implementation - how and whether court decisions are translated into actual policy

Judicial restraint - theory that judges should play minimal role in policymaking and leave policy decisions to the legislature

Judicial activism - theory that judges should make bolder policy decisions to alleviate pressing needs, especially for those who are weak politically

Capitalism - an economic system in which individuals and corporations own the principal means of production, through which they seek to reap profits

Inflation - a government statistic that measures increases in the price of goods

Fiscal policy - the government's decisions to tax, spend, and borrow, as reflected in the federal budget

Supply-side economics - economic philosophy that holds that the key task for government economic policy is to stimulate the supply of goods, not their demand

Social welfare policies - attempt to provide assistance and support to specific groups in society

Entitlement programs - government benefits that certain qualified individuals are entitled to by law, regardless of need

Progressive tax - takes a higher percentage from the rich than from the poor

Regressive tax - takes a higher percentage from the poor than from the rich

Medicaid – A public assistance program designed to provide health care for poor Americans, funded by both state and federal governments.

Other Items for review

1. U.S Constitution

- a. Article I
- b. Article II
- c. Article III

2. The Bill of Rights

- a. 1st
- b. 4th
- c. 5th
- d. 8th
- e. 10th

3. Other Amendments

- a. 13th
- b. 14th
- c. 15th
- d. 19th
- e. 22nd
- f. 25th

4. The Federalist Papers

- a. #10
- b. #70
- c. #78

Supreme Court Decisions

Marbury v. Madison (1803) - Judicial review was established in this 1803 Supreme Court case

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819) - the 1819 Supreme Court case, which established the supremacy of the national government over the states, included both enumerated and implied powers of Congress

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824) - the 1824 Supreme Court case which further expanded Congress' power to regulate interstate and international commerce by defining commerce very broadly to incorporate very form of commercial activity

Schenck v. US (1919) - Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes declared that government can limit speech if it provokes a **clear and present danger** of "substantive evils."

Gitlow v. NY (1925) - Supreme Court decision holding that freedoms of press and speech are "fundamental personal rights and liberties protected by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment form impairment by the states "as well as by the federal government

Near v. Minnesota (1931) - *Supreme* Court decision holding that the First Amendment protects newspapers from prior restraint

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) - marks the *beginning of the era of civil rights*. The Supreme Court used *Brown* to set aside its earlier precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In a landmark decision, the Court held that school segregation was *inherently unconstitutional* because it violated the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of *equal protection*.

Mapp v. Ohio (1961) – Supreme Court decision ruling that the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches and seizures must be extended to the states as well as to the federal government

Engel v. Vitale (1962) – The Supreme Court decision holding that state officials violated the First Amendment when they wrote a prayer to be recited by New York's schoolchildren

Gideon v. Wainwright (1963) – Supreme Court decision holding that anyone accused of a felony where imprisonment may be imposed, however poor he or she might be, has a right to a lawyer

New York Times v. Sullivan (1964) – this case established the guidelines for determining whether public officials and public figures could win damage suits for libel. To do so, individuals must prove that the defamatory statements were made with "actual malice" and reckless disregard for the truth.

Griswold v. Connecticut (1965) – Supreme Court decision that stated that various portions of the Bill of Rights cast "penumbras" (or shadows) –unstated liberties implied by the explicitly stated rights—protecting the right to privacy, including a right to family planning between a husband and wife.

Miranda v. Arizona (1966) - set guidelines for police questioning of suspects, whereby suspects must be informed of their constitutional rights

Miller v. California (1973) - Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote that materials were obscene if, taken as a whole, they appealed "to a prurient interest in sex"; showed "patently offensive" sexual conduct that was specifically defined by an obscenity

Roe v. Wade (1973) - followed the practice of medical authorities in dividing pregnancy into three equal *trimesters*. *Roe* forbade any state control of abortions during the first trimester; permitted states to allow regulated abortions to protect the mother's health in the second trimester; and allowed the states to ban abortion during the third trimester except when the mother's life was in danger.

United States v. Nixon (1974) – The Supreme Court unanimously held that the doctrine of executive privilege was implicit in the Constitution but could not be extended to protect documents relevant to criminal prosecutions.

Buckley v. Valeo (1976) – Supreme Court decision that struck down, as a violation of free speech, the portion of the Federal Election Campaign Act that limited the amount individuals could contribute to their own campaigns.

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978) - the Court rejected a plan at the University of California at Davis that set aside 16 of a total of 100 places in the entering medical school class for “disadvantaged groups.” The Court said a university could not set aside a *quota* of spots for particular groups. However, the Court said that a university could adopt an “admissions program where race or ethnic background is simply one element in the selection process.”

Texas v. Johnson (1989) - case in which the Supreme Court struck down a law banning the burning of the American flag on the grounds that such action was symbolic speech protected by the First Amendment